

***We want to go far, so we go
together***

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY



January 2020



Introduction

Founded on principles of *excellence, equality and opportunity for all*, the University of York is proud to create an environment that attracts the best staff and students from all over the world. What we gain from our diverse communities is positive and immeasurable. We want all our staff and students to feel they are an integral part of the York community and together we will create an inclusive culture where everyone can contribute to university life, understanding, knowledge and growth.

As one of the largest departments in the University, the Department of Health Sciences is determined and committed to facilitating inclusion among its diverse staff members and students as a way of promoting equality. It is equally committed to challenging disadvantage and discrimination.

We believe a commitment to promoting inclusion and equality is everyone's responsibility. The Department has a responsibility for creating an environment to enable staff and students to achieve this.

The Department of Health Sciences

The Department of Health Sciences is home to around 330 members of staff and about 720 students that are representing Asia, Asia Pacific, Africa, Europe, Americas and the Middle East. We are one of the most diverse Departments within the University, including the representation of people who identify with various gender, sexuality and faith groups. We also remain committed to accommodating staff members and students from across the adult life course and with a range of disabling experiences. A suite of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (including a doctoral programme) brings students to study nursing, midwifery, advanced clinical practice, public health, international humanitarian affairs, clinical statistics, and applied health research.

The Department takes seriously its responsibilities under the UK Equality Act, 2010 (including the importance of ensuring the nine protected characteristics do not become the basis of discriminatory practices), is committed to the principles of Athena SWAN and supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008). Discrimination and disadvantage can take many different forms and we continuously attempt to improve an inclusive environment for all our staff members, students and the public.

There are six core research groups in the Department: Cancer Epidemiology; Cardiovascular Health; Health Services and Policy; Mental Health and Addictions; Public Health and Society; and York Trials Unit and Statistics. These research activities contribute to intellectual and scholarly debates, but also improved policy and practices in their respective fields. Research collaborations and partnerships are distributed locally, nationally, regionally and globally. We see this as a strength of what we do.

The Department maintains a network of academic institutions and scholars from the UK, Europe, Americas, Asia, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. These collaborations are equal by nature and focus on improving the health and wellbeing of everyone.

Vision Statement:

In a global world where there are challenges to equality and inclusion, the Department of Health Sciences will facilitate:

- a sense of belonging and association;
- positive professional relationships and collegiality;
- equal participation and opportunities;
- appreciation of rights and responsibilities; and
- development and learning.

The Department will generate a creative, innovative and free-thinking, learning environment that enable all staff and students to flourish and achieve their full potential, while also providing them the opportunity of contributing to and experiencing inclusiveness.

Commitment

The Department of Health Sciences, by working together with all the staff members and students, will facilitate an environment where diversity is acknowledged and appreciated. The Department will proactively advance and promote equal and inclusive practices for all academic and professional staff members and the student community. These practices include staff and student recruitment and admission processes; in teaching and learning activities; in research and development activities; and in our relationships with external partners.

Values and Principles

Based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948; General Assembly resolution 217 A), the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy of the Department of Health Sciences is based on the following values that can be framed as a rights-based approach:

1. **Equality in Dignity and Rights:** All staff members and students are free and equal in dignity and rights. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, gender, orientation, age, disability, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
2. **Non-discrimination:** The Department recognise non-discrimination as a cross-cutting principle and values within its academic and professional environment. In this the Department draw inspirations from international human rights conventions such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in addition to British legal frameworks such as the UK Equality Act, 2010.
3. **Participation and Inclusion:** All the staff and students are entitled to participate in processes that affect their professional lives and wellbeing.

4. **Responsibilities and Commitments:** All staff and students of the Department of Health Sciences have a responsibility and should be committed to protect the equality of dignity and rights of everyone in the Department.
5. **Interdependent and indivisible:** All the academic and professional activities of the Department are indivisible from equality of dignity and rights. The improvement of one activity facilitates the advancement of others.
6. **Accountability and Obligations:** The Department of Health Sciences has a duty and responsibility to maintain equality in dignity and rights as well as promote participation and inclusion at all levels of functionalities.

As this is a Department of Health Sciences, our principles are driven by the ideologies of the World Health Organisation (WHO):

1. Equality in diversity and inclusion contribute to complete wellbeing of staff and students of the Department of Health Sciences.
2. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of equality in dignity and inclusion is one of the fundamental rights of all the staff members and students in the Department without distinction.
3. The equality and inclusion of all the staff and students is fundamental to the achievement of sustainability, relevance, effectiveness and success of the Department of Health Sciences.
4. The achievement of equality and inclusion of all diversities is of value of all in the Department.
5. Discrimination and exclusion are a common threat to the wellbeing of all staff and students of the Department.
6. The ability to work harmoniously in a vibrant and dynamic environment is essential to sustainability, relevance, effectiveness and success of the Department of Health Sciences.
7. The extension to all staff and students of the benefit of expertise, knowledge and skills is essential to achieving equality and inclusion of diversity.
8. Informed opinion and active co-operation on the part of staff and students are of the utmost importance in the improvement of equality and inclusion.
9. The Department of Health Sciences have a responsibility for the wellbeing of the staff and students, which can be fulfilled by realising equality in dignity and inclusion of all diversities. This includes a commitment to challenging discriminatory and exclusionary activities and outcomes, as the basis of promoting social justice for all.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Strategic Objectives

Objective 1: Improving wellbeing through incorporated equality, diversity and inclusiveness

The Department of Health Sciences will lead by example. There is a commitment by the Senior Management of the Department to respect the diversity of the students and staff members. Staff and students also need to be aware of their responsibilities with regard to facilitating inclusion and tackling discriminatory practices. It is important that equality, diversity and inclusion is safeguarded from both top-down and bottom-up efforts. This will be achieved by ensuring:

- the equality and inclusiveness to be incorporated into all the policies of the Department of Health Sciences;
- inclusivity is reflected in the Department's decision-making bodies and committees, and that they actively contribute to promoting equality and inclusiveness in practice;
- determination and commitment to support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion within all the relevant units, sections and teams within the Department; and,
- inclusion, by becoming the basis of equality and social justice, acts as a challenge to discriminatory outcomes.

Objective 2: Increasing awareness and action through education, research and development

The Department of Health Sciences strongly understand that it has an added responsibility towards equality, diversity and inclusion through its own mandate of health. The effort of the Department of Health Sciences is to incorporate equality and inclusiveness into all the dimensions of the teaching, research and support activities. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into teaching curriculums and that staff members are able transfer these concepts and practices to student learning journey within all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes;
- the *Do No Harm*¹ principle is rooted in all the research design, planning and execution to promote equality, social justice, diversity and inclusion; and
- all the activities of the Department incorporate the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Objective 3: Collaboration with local, regional, national and international stakeholders

The Department of Health Sciences strongly believe that equality, diversity and inclusion cannot be sustained without collaborations with other Departments and Services of the University of York as well as local, regional, national and international stakeholders. In this, the Department, by working in partnership, will establish interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary activities that are oriented towards promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the University and beyond. This will be achieved by:

- ensuring cross-Departmental teaching, research and inward and outward activities, focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion are facilitated;
- establishing strong links with local, regional and national bodies in the UK to co-implement activities on equality, diversity and inclusion; and,
- collaborating with international universities and organisations to co-organise activities on challenging inequality and discrimination, while promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

¹ Keeping in line with the Articles 1 and 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.

Our Realisation

The Department of Health Sciences strongly understand that equality and inclusion are not goals to achieve but experiences to realise. The Department will continue to support staff and students, enabling them to realise these experiences in their day-to-day activities, thereby ensuring they achieve their potential and flourish during their work and studies. As part of this commitment, the Department will promote social justice and ensure it becomes an underlying principle of all its activities.